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# The Friday Letter

Vol. 12 No. 8

May 4, 1990

## Watkins Visits Northeast Regional and Field Offices



On a recent NERO visit, Deputy Assistant Secretary Birge Watkins had the opportunity to visit the Alexander Abraham Residence on New York's West Side.

The Abraham Residence is a good example of public and private sectors working together to combat the problems of homelessness.

What started as an idea for Nancy Abraham and her father became the goal of a committed team of volunteers who raised the funds needed to open a home for homeless women and children. The residence now houses 31 families who move on to their own apartments and jobs after an average stay of 6 to 8 months.

While private-sector support got the residence started, its continuation would not be possible without government help. The home provides a number of support services to the residents; key among them is the nutritional support provided by FNS.

(Watkins Continued Page 2)

## Nelsen Addresses the Wisconsin Family Assistance Conference

Administrator Betty Jo Nelsen was a keynote speaker at the March 28 Family Assistance Conference in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Introduced by her former college roommate, Wisconsin's Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services Patricia Goodrich, Nelsen discussed proposed food stamp legislation and FNS' attempt to coordinate Food Stamp Program and Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) policy. Her speech was well received by more than 400 participants.



During a break in the Annual Family Assistance Conference, Associate Director of Financial Assistance Programs for the Wisconsin Department of Social Services Bob Davis (left) and MWRO Food Stamp Program Director Dustan Van Vleet discuss child care facilities in Milwaukee County with Administrator Betty Jo Nelsen.

The purpose of the conference was to strengthen the partnership among the divisions of economic support and

(Nelsen Continued Page 3)



(Watkins Continued)

The Food Stamp Program benefits all the residents, and 50 percent of the women and infants use the Supplemental Food Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC). Federal Government commodity assistance is the newest part of the support.

This food assistance helps families rebuild their lives. Dinner is provided every night, and the families prepare their own breakfasts and lunches using USDA foods. Maura Kelly, the coordinator of administrative services, sees Federal food assistance as an integral part of the services offered by the residence. "Without it, all the other good things we try to provide would not work as well together." See article in Food and Nutrition, Fall-Winter 1989 issue.



Gilda Chapparo of the New York City Field Office demonstrates the Integrated Retailer Information System (IRIS) project to Watkins. Developed by NERO's Automated Data Processing and Assistant Regional Administrator staffs, IRIS is expected to automate the food stamp retailer authorization process and have a profound effect on the timeliness and accuracy of authorizing a store. Cross-checks are immediately made about the owner, the store, the store address, and the person applying as the information is entered. The system is currently being pilot-tested in Manhattan.

-Story and photo by  
NERO Public Affairs Staff

## SERO Employee Honored

SERO information specialist Connie Crunkleton has been selected as Communicator of the Year by the Metro Atlanta Agricultural Communicators (MAAC).

The award recipient, nominated by members of the organization, was selected for her professionalism and pursuit of excellence in agricultural journalism and for her contributions to the MAAC chapter. This was also the first time anyone outside of private industry has received the award.

Most recently, Crunkleton represented FNS on an emergency task force to supply information on the emergency food assistance relief efforts in the aftermath of Hurricane Hugo. This included serving as the USDA spokesperson at daily press conferences held in Charleston, South Carolina.

She is one of the founding members of the MAAC organization and served as its first president. Founded in 1981, its members are people in agribusiness, state and Federal agricultural departments, commodity organizations, advertising and public relations agencies, and others involved in agricultural communications. Its purpose is to enhance the awareness of agriculture as the basis of American society.



Information specialist Connie Crunkleton (left) receives Communicator of the Year Award from Jean Rice, retired vice president of Gold Kist, Inc.



(Nelsen Continued)

local child support and the income maintenance agencies. The conference also examined state and national trends for income maintenance and child support, and participants shared state and local strategies for welfare reform.

In addition to speeches by Nelsen and Health and Human Services Region 5 Family Support Administrator Marion Steffy, participants attended various workshops designed for income maintenance and child support staff.

-Story by Diana Pihos  
Photo by Mary Jane Getlinger  
MWRO Public Affairs Staff

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## MARO Toastmasters Win Awards

MARO's Karen Van Dyke, Trenton, New Jersey, officer in charge, and Pearl Watson, Charleston, West Virginia, food program specialist, were awarded "The Outstanding Toastmaster of the Year Award."

Van Dyke and Watson were selected because of their continuing service and dedication to the Toastmaster organization.



MARO Administrator Christopher Martin presents "The Outstanding Toastmaster of the Year Award" to Karen Van Dyke, Trenton, New Jersey, officer in charge.

In the mid 1980's, as MARO's club membership dwindled, past two-time president Van Dyke became president once more and brought new members into the club. Van Dyke was cited for remaining a mentor, unselfishly giving her time and experience to the new members, many of whom are club officers.



Watson, who belongs to the Marvin G. Rook Chapter of Toastmaster's, also is a divisional lieutenant governor for the organization. She was commended for always attending meetings and often giving last minute impromptu speeches for absent members.

-Story by Kim Jabot  
MARO Public Affairs Staff  
Photos by MARO Staff

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## Telephone Etiquette Takes Little Time Yet Has a Lasting Effect

"Food and Nutrition Service, Marketia Gant speaking. No, she isn't in right now. Would you like to leave a message?" Telephone etiquette was the topic of a class recently held by Southern Bell operator Brenda Barkley at SERO.

(Etiquette Continued Page 4)



All interested employees were invited, but the targeted audience was FNS secretaries and clerks.

According to Barkley, "It's especially important for secretaries in government jobs to have good telephone etiquette because you receive calls from the public. It's your duty to serve them the best way possible." She went on to say, "Each of you represents the agency. What the callers think of you is what they think of the agency. This is why telephone etiquette is so

important. It helps maintain good customer relations."

Barkley offered her list of "Do's and Don'ts." They are: Be natural. Use simple language. Be courteous--"good morning," "thank you," etc. Speak in a moderate tone, not like a computer. Never leave the caller on hold. Never cut the caller off while he or she is talking. Let the caller hang up first.

The etiquette class received a lot of positive responses. Natasha White of the Special Nutrition Program said, "I really enjoyed it. She touched on situations that secretaries encounter every day and gave helpful tips on how to handle problems. Now, when problems occur, I'll remember the tips she gave us."

In closing, Barkley told SERO secretaries that the telephone etiquette guide used in an unclear situation at Southern Bell is this old saying, "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you."

-Story and photo by Walt Frazier  
SERO Public Affairs Staff

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## SWRO Names Special Emphasis Council

Recently named for 2-year terms to SWRO's Special Emphasis Council are (seated left to right) program managers Tajammul Hussain (Disabilities Employment), Esther Phillips (Black Employment), Esther Jones (Federal Women), and (standing right) Rosa Coronado (Hispanic Employment). EEO Specialist Rebecca Lucero (standing left) is coordinator for the council and provides continuity for its work. The council's goal is to provide a better EEO environment for all SWRO employees.

-Photo by Blanche Jackson  
SWRO Public Affairs Staff





## New Food Stamp Initiative Combats Fraud in Ohio

At a recent Columbus, Ohio, news conference, MWRO Administrator Monroe Woods and the Ohio State Commissioners of the Departments of Agriculture, Liquor, Lottery, and Human Services jointly announced an agreement to share information about violations in their respective programs.

The agreement allows the Ohio Department of Agriculture, along with the Office of the Inspector General and the FNS Compliance Branch, to share results of fraud investigations with FNS and the other State agencies. As a result, the violating firms may receive additional sanctions for violating Federal Food Stamp Program regulations.



Proudly displaying their plaque from the Ohio Council on Welfare Fraud for MWRO's efforts in assisting the council are (from left to right) Food Stamp Program's State Operations Unit Assistant Section Chief James Logan, Director Dustan Van Vleet, Supervisory Food Program Specialist David Witt, and Federal Operations Unit Assistant Section Chief Ricardo Almendarez.

FNS will begin providing the Ohio Department of Liquor Control and the Ohio Lottery Commission with information on firms sanctioned for Food Stamp Program violations. In turn, the Ohio Department of Liquor Control will cite holders of liquor permits and will provide FNS with

information on those violating liquor laws; and the Ohio Lottery Commission may deny lottery agent applications or discipline already licensed agents.

The Ohio Department of Human Services, which oversees the Food Stamp Program in Ohio and provides food stamps used in Ohio Department of Agriculture investigations, will also assist.

All agencies are enthusiastic about this potentially effective measure in the fight against fraud and abuse in the Food Stamp Program.

-Story by Diana Pihos  
Photo by Lawrence Rudmann  
MWRO Public Affairs Staff

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## NERO Meeting Addresses Food Stamp Issues

NERO field office staff descended on Boston for a 3-day meeting on food stamp procedures. Besides being briefed on the new application form, field staff discussed new documentation requirements for applicant retailers and the national initiative to have authorized retailers update sales information.



John Ghiorzi (left), NERO assistant regional administrator, listens as Jordan Benderly, Benefit Redemption Division director, describes procedures for the new application form.

-Story and photo by  
NERO Public Affairs Staff

## Job Opportunities

FNS is seeking to fill the vacant positions listed below. To be considered for one of them, submit an up-to-date SF-171, Application for Federal Employment, and current performance appraisal to the appropriate personnel office. If you are interested in a headquarters position, apply to the Operations Branch, Personnel Division, Food and Nutrition Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Alexandria, Virginia

22302. Apply directly to headquarters office for all GM-14 and 15 positions. For regional positions, apply directly to the regional office. For details on the requirements for any of the positions listed below, consult the official vacancy announcement. These are posted on designated bulletin boards or copies can be obtained from the appropriate regional or headquarters personnel office.

### Friday Letter Vacancy Listing By Vacancy Number

JOB TITLE	AREA OF CONSID.	SERIES	GRADE	CLOSING DATE	VACANCY NUMBER	OFFICE LOCATION
o Math. Statistician	(A)	GS-1529	9/12	05/21/90	90-H-23*	HNIS
o Statistician	(A)	GS-1530	7/9	05/29/90	90-H-71	HNIS
o Employee Rel. Asst. (FNS-HQ)		GS-0203	6	05/14/90	90-74	PED
o Secretary Typing	(A)	GS-0318	5/6	05/21/90	90-75	NTSD
o Program Analyst	(A)	GS-0345	9/13	05/21/90	90-76	OAE

#### Office Location

HNIS - Human Nutrition Information Service  
 PED - Personnel Division  
 NTSD - Nutrition and Technical Services Division  
 OAE - Office of Analysis and Evaluation

#### Area of Consideration

(A) - All Sources  
 (FNS-HQ) - Food and Nutrition Service-Hdgrs.

\* - Reannouncement

Mary E. Kennedy, Editor

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